

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MINUTES – JULY 21, 2004

Chairman Chris Dollar called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

**Approval for Minutes from June 2004 Meeting**

- June minutes were approved without changes.

**WHS Administrative Program Update**

- Presentation by Mark Hoffman, Associate Director
- The Administrative Program provides support to the staff of WHS.
- Permits Coordinator, Mary Goldie is responsible for 20 different WHS permits that provide authority to the public for vast amount of activities with wildlife.
- Blindsites Coordinator, Lena Pajewska is responsible for the riparian license protocols. Ms. Pajewska also coordinates the processing of non-riparian licenses.
  - 1) SB 59 – incorporated several changes to the offshore license process. Non-riparians will be required to present a valid Maryland hunting license to be able to participate in the lottery.
  - 2) Starting next year, the riparian will have the option to renew his or her license for 1-year (cost of \$20.00) or for 3-years (cost of \$60.00).
- Budget – there continues to be significant issues associated with the State budget.
  - 1) The Secretary of Budget and Management announced to the public a 12-percent reduction of General Funds to state agencies. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has not received formal notification related to how much reduction will be targeted for DNR.
  - 2) Governor Ehrlich implemented a new strategic budget process. Basically, it's a methodology for evaluating and prioritizing all state government. One of the items that will be reviewed is funds transfer between programs.
  - 3) WHS went from 1.3 million dollars of General Funds (GF) to \$50,000 of General Fund's reduction over the past 2-years. WHS was the only unit within DNR with that amount of reduction.
    - (a) The reason for the WHS reduction of GF was because of increase in hunting fees two years ago. SB599 made available an increase of Special Funds totaling about \$1 million dollars.
    - (b) Ultimately, it was decided that it would be appropriate to reduce GF from WHS. Commissioner Lamp and members of MSA rallied, trying to prevent the reduction. Unfortunately, they did not prevail.
      - (i) Commissioner Adams pointed out that it seems the more this Commission tries broadening the funding source for wildlife by reaching out to the greater constituencies, it keeps shrinking back on the shoulders of hunters.
      - (ii) There is a need for broad base public support. The legislators need to hear from (the non-hunting community) public supporters.
      - (iii) Commissioner Lamp suggested that we need guidance on how to gain more support from the legislators on conservation matters.
    - (c) WHS staff works closely with the Sportsmen's Legislative Caucus. Staff will continue to argue that WHS has already contributed to the cause and that WHS has limited amount of money left. The WHS supports the Ehrlich and Steele five pillars.

**Legislative Concepts Finalized**

- Presentation given by Associate Director, Mark Hoffman
- The purpose of this agenda item is to seek input from the Commission related to potential legislative concepts for the 2005 General Assembly.
- WHS will revisit the User Fees bill, which will allow us to establish fees up to \$30.00 for services or access to WHS program activities.
  - 1) For example, WMAs include more than 125,000 acres, which are very popular with many user groups. Other than hunters, the horseback riders, the birding community, and the dog walkers all use these areas. WHS staff spend over \$1.3 million dollars yearly to manage these lands.
  - 2) The idea is to develop a yearly pass for the non-consumptive users. Staff will revisit this during the 2005 Legislative Session. It would be a good idea to have some of the user groups demonstrate their support.
- The Wildlife Heritage Fund was passed out to Commissioners and it is on the WAC August Agenda. For this to be a Departmental or Administrative bill the support of the Commission would have to be decided today. However, a private sponsor could propose the Wildlife Heritage Fund, and then the Department could decide whether to support or not to support the proposed bill.
- Furbearer User Stamp – In our furbearer management program, there is a desire to capture better information about the users of fur resource from a management point of view.

- 1) There is a current survey, which does not adequately sample fur users. The furbearer user stamp would assist in monitoring Maryland's furbearer species.
- 2) Another component is the educational requirements. For example, leghold traps have been in the General Assembly for the last three years, and to address concerns, trappers are required to go through mandatory education. The Furbearer User Stamp is a product of the outgrowth work accomplished by the Fur User Committee.
- 3) Maryland statute exempts fox chasers from needing a hunting license; it's considered a non-hunting activity. Fox Chasers have representation on the Fur User Committee; and the fox chasers are interested in contributing to wildlife management.

#### **Waterfowl Season Proposals**

- In the absence of Larry Hindman, Bill Harvey, Game Bird Team Manager presented this report. Larry Hindman is attending the Atlantic Flyway Council Meeting with Director Paul A. Peditto.
- Bill Harvey handed out Trends in Duck Breeding Populations [Attachment A], a report provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It's a survey conducted by the USFWS. USFWS has been performing this survey since the 1950s.
- Bill Harvey handed out A Breeding Pair Survey of Canada Geese in Northern Quebec [Attachment B]. This survey has replaced the mid-winter survey, for it is the primary way that the AP Canada Geese are monitored. USFWS and Atlantic Flyway Council are co-sponsors of the AP Canada Geese Survey which is not conducted by any other agency.
- Bill Harvey handed out Preliminary Maryland Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits for the 2004-2005 Hunting Year [Attachment C] and 2004-2005 Calendar [Attachment D]. Until the USFWS provide us the frameworks, these seasons are preliminary.
- Bill Harvey gave a Power Point Presentation to outline the AP Canada Goose Season and Maryland Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits.
  - 1) There was group discussion on the AP Canada Goose Season reducing the harvest amount and increasing the number of days to 55. The federal government provides the states' frameworks that they are required to work within. The maximum number of days allocated for the AP Canada Goose Season is 45 days.
    - (a) In scientific terms, WHS's objective at the moment is to have 175,000 pairs, and an ultimate goal of about 250,000 pairs. To increase the bag limit to 2 will slow down the growth slightly, but the level of managing will still allow population to grow and allow more to be harvested.
    - (b) Most people who enjoy the sport of hunting geese, desire that the population improves and become stable. Geese hunters have a natural caring capacity, and they are concerned about the changes in the environment and the ecology of the Bay and the Ungava Peninsula. These concerns are part of the 2000 Chesapeake Bay Agreement.
  - 2) There was group discussion on limiting AP Canada Goose harvest for the Waterfowl Outfitter Guides. Chairman Dollar recommended that after the population is more stable that WHS adds more restrictions to the harvest amount a guide may take while outfitting.

#### **Responsive Management: Public Attitudes towards Black Bear Management in Maryland**

- Presentation by Steve Bittner, Game Mammal Team Manager
  - 1) Commissioners received a copy of results by means of e-mail or by mail.
  - 2) Steve Bittner outlined the Executive Summary of the Public Attitudes towards Black Bear Management in Maryland [Attachment E].
  - 3) The Black Bear Task Force, which met in 2002 and part of 2003, recommended that the Department conduct a survey on the public attitudes towards Black Bear Management in Maryland. Responsive Management (RM) team specializes in conducting opinion surveys for Natural Resources agencies. The survey was conducted in June and the cost to the Department was \$ 24,250 for the analysis.
    - (a) The report is 180-pages and Steve Bittner encouraged the Commissioners to read the report. There is an e-mail from Mr. Mark Duda referencing Commissioner Lamp concerns about methodology. Mr. Duda commented in his email to Bob Beyer that Responsive Management has done both descriptive and inferential analyses.
    - (b) Commissioner Lamp contacted Mr. Duda regarding addressing the concern of the frequency reporting of the question by question synopsis of the survey results.
    - (c) Commissioners agreed to permit Commissioner Lamp to do the analyses. Chairman Dollar asked that he bring the results to the Department and to the Commission attention first. In doing so, it will allow the Department to review his findings.

**State Forest & Park Service Update**

- No Report

**Natural Resources Police Update**

- No Report

**Maryland Farm Bureau Update**

- Presentation by Kurt Fuchs, Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) Representative
- Mr. Fuchs went to the Wildlife Diversity Plan meeting at Patuxent Wildlife Refuge Center, which was very informative.
- Maryland Farm Bureau's Wildlife Committee will meet to discuss some of the things affecting our farmers around the State.

**Old Business**

- Operational Guidelines for the Urban Wildlife Subcommittee [previous Attachment G], with the Commissioners approval, Commissioner Lamp changed the document from a proposal to a final statement.
  - 1) Commissioner Adams made a one-page list of Operational Guidelines for the Urban Wildlife Subcommittee of the Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission [Attachment F] for the Commissioners to review.
  - 2) Chairman Dollar recommended the following changes:
    - (a) Add "As necessary to the beginning of 1.d. of Operational Guidelines for the Urban Wildlife Subcommittee of the Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission [Attachment F].
    - (b) Use the wording "charge" rather than "purpose" in 3.
- Commissioner Pascal motion to accept the amended version of Operational Guidelines for the Urban Wildlife Subcommittee with the adoption date of June 21, 2004. Commissioner Dollar and Commissioner Lamp seconded motion. Motion passed.

**New Business**

- Commissioner Pascal made a motion for DNR to consider controlling harvested geese by guides while they are working for an outfitter.
  - 1) The Waterfowl Outfitters regulations adopted during the 2004 General Assembly do not take effect until 2005-2006 hunting season.
  - 2) Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- Commissioner Lamp brought to the Commissioners' attention that [Appendix A] the June 21, 2004 WAC Minutes enclosures mentioned the plan for a sharpshooter program on Sandy Point in the Fall followed by a bow hunting program in 2005-06, approved up to the Assistant Secretary's level. Commissioner Adams suggested changing the wording from sharpshooters to regulated shooting.
  - 1) Commissioner Lamp encouraged the Department to examine carefully the issue before allowing lethal methods to be used on Sandy Point.
  - 2) The deer team has been working with State Forest and State Parks on how to manage the deer population on Sandy Point. Staff will seek public input.
  - 3) Chairman Dollar suggested that further communication be done between WHS and Commissioner Lamp's constituencies. Also, Commissioner Dollar encouraged staff to provide adequate time to allow the public an opportunity to understand the plan.
- Chairman Dollar will invite former chairman Mr. Tim Lambert to the August meeting for the Wildlife Heritage Fund discussion. Also, Commissioner Adams will invite Tom Franklin from the Maryland's Teaming with Wildlife Coalition to discuss the Wildlife Heritage Fund.
- Chairman Dollar talked to Director Peditto regarding the composition of the Commission as it stands. Several of the members' terms have expired. Director Peditto and Mr. Pascal asked the Appointment's Office for input, but have not received substantial information that can be shared with the Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

**Attendance**

Members:	L. Adams, C. Dollar, G. Fratz, L R. Gregory, L. Julio, J. Lamp, R. Pascal
Guests:	K. Fuchs
Staff:	S. Bittner, R. Charron, B. Harvey, M. Hoffman, T. Spencer, G. Therres
Absent:	J. Scarborough, C. Garner